THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SHRIMATI SURYAKANTA PATIL): (a) and (b) The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 was notified in the Gazette of India on 7th September, 2005. Section 1 (3) of the Act provides that the Act shall come into force on such a date as the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint; and different dates may be appointed for different States or for different areas in a State. The State Government is required to formulate schemes within a period of six months from the date of such notification. The Central Government has so far not notified the date of implementation of the Act. None of the States has so far sought for more time for the implementation of the Act.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Entire cost of unskilled wages, 75% of the material and skilled wage cost and administrative expenses as determined by the Central Government, will be met by the Central Government.

Establishing village knowledge centres

117. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is need for establishing Village Knowledge Centres to serve as helpdesks, Confidence builders and e-governance nodal points for empowering villagers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the action plan of Government to develop such centres in Orissa to help the villagers to increase their knowledge, inculcate reading habits and generate employment potential in these areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI SURYA KANTA PATIL): (a) and (b) As per the information provided by NABARD, there is need for establishing Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) to promote E-Business, E-Governance and Information Dissemination in Rural Areas. An announcement has been

made in the Budget (2005) that NABARD will finance VKCs under Rural Infrastructure Developmetn Fund (RIDF) to State Governments. Guidelines for project formulation have been issued by NABARD.

(c) A State Level Steering Committee has been formed by the Government of Orissa for smooth and effective implementation of RIDF assisted VKCs. Director, Information Technology has been designated as Liaison Officer and the Department of IT has been made the Nodal Department. However, no project proposal has so far been received by NABARD from Government of Orissa.

Making Indian textile industry globally competitive

118. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently decided to aodpt a number of fresh measures to make Indian textile industry globally competitive following the abolition of Multi-Fibre Arrangement *w.e.f.* January, 2005.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when the full import of these measures will be perceptible; and

(d) whether steps have also been taken to protect the interest of labour in the textile industry and if so the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI SHANKERSINH VAGHELA): (a) to (c) The Government has been taking a number of steps from time to time to make Indian textile industry globally competitive. Some of the important initiatives taken are given as under:-

(i) 100% Foreign Direct Investment is allowed in the textile sector under the automatic route.

(ii) The Government has de-reserved the readymade garments, hosiery and knitwear from the SSI sector.

(iii) The Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (TUFS) has been made operational from 1-4-1999 to facilitate the modernization and upgradation of the sector.

(iv) To improve the productivity and quality of cotton, Government has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton (TMC). Incentives are provided for better farm practices, quality seeds, improvement in market infrastructure and modernisation of ginning and pressing sector.